

The Law of God's House.

2058

A

S E R M O N,

Preached on the Sabbath Evening,

Immediately after the Celebration of the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, at *Dunfermline*, July 16. 1732.

By the late Reverend

Mr. R A L P H E R S K I N E,

Minister of the Gospel at Dunfermline. <

PSAL. xciii. 5.

Holiness becometh thine House, O Lord, for ever.

G L A S G O W:

Printed by JOHN BRYCE, and Sold by him at
his Shop in the Salt-market. 1769.



S E R M O N.

EZEK. xliii. 12.

This is the Law of the House ; Upon the Top of the Mountain, the whole Limit thereof round about shall be most holy : Behold, this is the Law of the House.

IT is most suitable and necessary, that these who have been making a solemn profession of their being of the *household of faith* ; who have been eating and drinking in God's house, as *fellow-citizens with the saints*, and of the *household of God*, should know the order and *law of the house* ; and, therefore, I lay before you a short sum of it, very emphatically here expressed ; *This is the law of the house ; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy : behold, this is the law of the house.*

In the beginning of the chapter we have an account of the glory of God *filling the temple*, particularly ver. 5. ; and then a promise of God's continuing his presence in his church, ver. 7, 8. to the purging them from their idolatry, corruption, and defilement, which here they are put in mind of, for their conviction and humiliation. From ver. 10. and downward, we have Israel exhorted to faith and repentance ; *Shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquity.* The temple was a token of God's kindness, and a symbol of his presence, as well as a type of Christ the true temple, and of the New-Testament church. And, when he enjoins to *shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed*, we may remark, that the way wherein a gracious God shames people for their sin, is to show them his kindness and gracious presence : thus he puts them out of counte-

nance, and sets them a blushing, chap. xvi. 63. *That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* Again, ver. 11. *If they be ashamed, then shew them the form of the house. &c.* When his kindness makes them ashamed of their sin, then he shews them more and more of his kindness, and grants them more and more of his gracious presence. In the close of ver. 11. *Write it in their sight, that they keep the form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.* Here remark, that the privileges of God's house and people do not supersede their duty, but bind them more sweetly and strictly thereunto; and therefore, obedience is here enjoined, and thereupon here is the rule laid down, 'This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.'

In which words we may notice the four following particulars.

1. What is the *matter* of the law of God's house, namely, *holiness*; that all the inhabitants be *holy*; for *holiness becometh God's house for ever.*

2. The *degree* of that holiness which becometh his house, namely, that it is *most holy*; the perfection of holiness is required.

3. Notice the *extent* thereof, *from the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.* Formerly, only the sanctuary was most holy; but now in the gospel-times, to which this prophecy hath a reference, the whole mount of the house shall be so, and the whole limit thereof; all the courts, all the chambers, and every part of the house, shall be as the most holy place.

4. The *double assurance* given us concerning this ordinance of God's house, *This is the law of the house*; and again, *Behold, this is the law of the house.*

By

By the *most holy* in the text, we are to understand, either the *privilege* of the house of God, in the gospel-times, namely, That all believers in Christ have *access unto the holy of holies*, and *boldness to enter into the holiest*, Heb. x. 19. ; they being all *spiritual priests*, a *royal priesthood*, they have access, not in the virtue of the blood of bulls and goats, but in the virtue of the blood of Jesus; and with this advantage also above the high-priest under the law, that, wherever we are, we have access through Christ to the Father: or, by the *most holy*, we are to understand the *duty* of the church of God, or children of his house, that they be *most holy*; and indeed the former privilege lays the strongest foundation for, and brings them under the strictest obligation to, the duty. According to the view we have here of the *most holy*, accordingly we are to understand what is to be meant by *the law of the house*.

If by *most holy*, we understand the *privilege* of access to the most holy place; then, by *the law of the house*, we are to understand the law of grace, the law of faith, the gospel, or God's act of grace towards us, expressed in the promise.

Again, if by the *most holy*, we understand the *quality* of the church, and the duty of all the children of the house, that they be *most holy*; then by *the law of the house*, we are to understand the *precept* of the moral law as a rule of holiness, duty, and obedience toward God. Both these, I suppose, may be included; and the former as the means of the latter. Gospel-privileges making way for gospel holiness, according to the order of the covenant of grace, in opposition to that of works, where *Do, and live*, made duty go before the privilege; whereas *Live, and do*, makes the privilege the foundation of duty, and the strong basis on which all gospel-holiness stands.

By *the top of the mountain*, and *the whole limit thereof round about*, we are to understand the *universality* of this holiness, and the extent both of that privilege
of

of admission to the holy place, and of that obligation upon the privileged to be a holy people.

OBSERV. *That universal holiness is so much the established law of God's house, that the whole family, being privileged with access to the most holy place, are thereupon under the strongest obligation to be the most holy people.*

The proof of this doctrine I refer to the prosecution of it in the following method, as the Lord may assist.

I. I would speak a little of *the house of God*.

II. Hint at the *nature* of that holiness that is peculiar to the house of God.

III. Show that this is the *law of the house*; and why it is said to be so again and again.

IV. Touch at the *extent* of this holiness required by the law of God's house, *upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about*.

V. Notice a little the *privilege* of access to the most holy place.

VI. Show that this privilege *obliges* the whole family to be the most holy people. And then,

VII. Make *application* of the whole in several uses.

I. I am first to speak a little of *the house of God*.

The church is the house of God; 'If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?' 1 Tim. iii. 5. And it is so called on several accounts;

1. God is the *builder* of it; *He that built all things is God*, Heb. iii. 4. The church is as glorious a piece of work as the building of heaven and earth; yea, more glorious. It is the work of glorious omnipotence, to make life out of death; he makes these that were dead in sins to be *living stones*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. 'What shall one answer the messengers of the nations? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it,' [OR, BETAKE THEMSELVES TO IT,] Isa. xiv. 32.

2. Because God is the *repairer* of it; it is he that *repairs the waste places, and the desolations of many generations*,

nerations, Isa. lxi. 4. And this is also a glorious work ; ' When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear ' in his glory,' Psal. cii. 16. It is too glorious for a creature ; he that is God as well as man hath the honour of it ascribed to him ; ' He, even he shall build ' the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear all the ' glory,' Zech. vi. 13. He may raise up instruments, but he himself is the principal agent. Saints may weep for Zion, but the Lord will rebuild and repair it.

3. Because God is the *dweller* therein : he dwells there where he sets his ordinances, though he confines not himself to places ; ' In all places where I record ' my name, I will come to thee, and bless thee,' Exod. xx. 24. God is known by his ordinances, as we are known by our names ; ' The Lord hath chosen Zion ; ' he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest ' for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have desired it,' Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

4. Because God is the *Governor* thereof : he alone gives laws of everlasting consequence, to destruction or salvation ; ' There is one lawgiver, who is able to ' save and to destroy,' Jam. iv. 12. *The Lord is our lawgiver.* Popes and patrons may usurp a government of the church ; but the Lord alone is the *God of conscience* ; and the government is upon his shoulders.

QUEST. *Who are the MEMBERS of this house of God?*

ANSW. The church is either *visible* or *invisible*. To the *visible* church on earth, belong all that have a visible and credible profession : and it is meet for us to judge that they are saints, as the apostle speaks to the Philippians, chap. i. 7. But we may be deceived ; we know not the heart ; therefore it concerns every professor to examine himself.---The *invisible* church is known by God only ; ' Nevertheless, the foundation ' of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord ' knows them that are his,' 2 Tim. ii. 19. Well, but how shall I know myself to be one of them ? Why,
it

it follows, 'Let every one, that nameth the name of
'Christ, depart from iniquity. To be of the *household*
of God, is not to be a member of the presbyterial go-
vernment, nor a *communicating* member of such a con-
gregation; but to be a *member of Christ*.

QUEST. *What sort of a HOUSE is the church unto*
God?

ANSW. As it is,

1. His *dwelling-house*: of which already; so,
2. It is his *pleasure-house*; *The Lord taketh pleasure*
in his people. O wonderful!

3. It is his *treasure-house*; for, 'the Lord's por-
'tion is his people, and Jacob the lot of his inheri-
'tance:' though he cannot be enriched therewith,
yet he reckons them his riches, his jewels, which he
will make up at the last day.

4. The church is also his *magazine-house*; 'built
'for an armory, whereon hang a thousand bucklers,
'all shields of mighty men.' God's church is his cas-
tle; and, 'salvation will God appoint for walls and
'bulwarks.' Again,

5. It is his *vessel-house*, wherein all the vessels of
mercy are hung; and Christ is the *nail fastned in a*
sure place, on which they hang, Isa. xxii. 23, 24.
Weak and strong are there.

6. It is also his *banqueting-house*, Song ii. 4. where
he and 'they feed together; he feeds among the li-
'lies, till the day break; and he sups with them, and
'they with him,' Rev. iii. 20.

II. The *second* thing proposed, was, To hint at the
nature of that *holiness* that is peculiar to the *house of*
God. HOLINESS, in the ordinary sense wherein it is
attributed to the church and children of God, may be
viewed,

1. In its *definition*. And, I think, it may be thus de-
fined, "A full and universal renovation of our na-
"tures, into the image of God, through Jesus Christ;
"by the Holy Spirit." It is called a *new birth*, a *new*
creation, a *new creature*: 'If any man be in Christ Je-
sus,

'sus, he is a new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' It is the *image of God*, who is holiness itself. It is a *grace*; yea, the conjunction and constellation of all the graces. It is a *duty*, and the sum and substance of all duty.

2. We may view it in its *spring*: it is neither natural nor acquired. It is not to be taken up by the strength of reason, nor the power of free-will, nor by the force of conviction and resolution from within or without: nay, 'He that hath wrought us to the self-same thing is God.' It is not to be ascribed to the virtue of ordinances, nor to the worth of the instruments, but to the powerful efficiency of the Holy Spirit of God; the sanctifying Spirit. Art, nature, education, can do nothing here; it is 'not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

3. We may view it in the *subject* of it, and that is the *believer in Christ*, his whole man; 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly; soul, body, and spirit,' 1 Thess. v. 2. If ye ask, Where is the *seat* of holiness, in the head, or the heart, or the conscience; in the inward or the outward man? We reply; The seat of holiness is not in any *one* of them, but in *all* of them; it is a leaven that leavens the whole lump. The holy man hath a sanctified, enlightened understanding, to discern spiritual things, which before he hated; a sanctified memory, to mind heavenly things, which before was only earthly; a sanctified conscience, awakned to check for sin, and excite to duty; a sanctified lip, to speak of God, and to speak to him, and for him; a sanctified life, to glorify God.

4. We may view it in the *parts* of it, which are two; a *ceasing to do evil*, and a *learning to do well*. The former is the privative, and the latter the positive part of it.—There is the *privative* part of holiness, which is called *mortification*; that is, a heart purged from the love of every sin, and a life purged from the practice of every sin: sin is left in the heart, but is not loved

nor liked; nay, it is hated and disliked: it may remain, but cannot reign where holiness is.---There is the *positive* part of holiness, which is called *vivification*, or a *living unto God*, by a life of dependence on him, and a life of obedience to him. The man not only *ceases to do evil*, but he *learns to do well*. It is, in short, a *walking with God*, a *walking with Christ*, and a *walking in the Spirit*.---After this hint of the nature of holiness, I proceed,

III. To the *third* thing, which was, To shew that this is *the law of the house*; and why it is here ingeminate and doubled, with a *Behold, this is the law of the house*. For clearing this head, you would consider three things; 1. What *law* it is that is called *the law of the house*. 2. How *holiness* is *the law of the house*. 3. The *reason* why this is redoubled.

1st, What *law* it is that is called *the law of the house*. For the clearing of this, ye would consider *three laws* that the house of God hath always had some concern in.

1. There is a *law* from which the house is *delivered*; that is, the *law of works*, or the covenant of works; this is the law they are delivered from; 'Ye are not 'under the law, but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14. They are not under it, to be either justified or condemned; they are neither under the *command* of it, to be justified by their obedience; nor under the *threatning* of it, to be condemned for their disobedience. Their title to eternal life stands upon Christ's doing and obedience; therefore they have nothing to do with the *do* and *live* of that covenant: their security from eternal death stands upon Christ's dying and suffering; therefore they have nothing to do with the penalty of that covenant, *If thou do not, thou shalt die*. Christ has 'delivered them from the curse of the law, being made 'a curse for them.' This law of works required holiness, indeed, in perfection; but in such a form, and under such a penalty, that, if there were no other law but this, we sinners and breakers of this law would be

be irrecoverably lost. By this law, holiness is lost, because the law is violated; and therefore, by *the deeds* thereof, *no flesh shall be justified* in God's sight: for sinners to be justified by works, or by the law, is a contradiction; the law can never justify a breaker of it, unless he have a perfect righteousness from another quarter and source than himself: therefore,

2. As there is a *law* from which the house is delivered, *viz.* the law of works; so there is a law by which the house is *recovered* and relieved, namely, the *law of faith*, or the covenant of grace. Of both these laws, which are clearly distinguished by the apostle, you read, Rom. iii. 27. 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.' This law of faith is nothing else but the *covenant of grace*, and the *doctrine of the gospel*. In a word, it is the *promise*, Gal. iii. 21. And it is called a *law*, both in opposition to the covenant of works, to show, that believers are not under the *law of works*, but the *law of grace*; and also to shew, that the free promises of the gospel are a law that God makes to himself in the behalf of sinners, or an act of the parliament of heaven. Acts of grace past there require no condition on the sinner's part, but only of the Surety, whose blood and righteousness is the condition of all the promises of God; which, therefore, are said to be *yea and amen in Christ, to the glory of God*. And it is called a *law of faith*, because the gospel, properly, is not a law to be obeyed; but a law to be believed. It is not a law of commands, to be fulfilled by us; but a law of promises, to be fulfilled upon us, in a way of free grace and therefore, here nothing is to be wrought or expected by works, but all things to be expected by grace; or believed, upon the faithfulness of a promising God; *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*, Rom. 4. 5. This *law of faith* is so much the law of God's house, that this is the very law that erects the

house : it stands upon the law of faith ; I mean, upon the free promise of God, which is the object and ground of faith. --All the privileges and immunities of the house are owing to the law of faith.----By the law of faith, or gospel-promise, sinners are warranted to come in to the most holy place, and so they come to be made most holy people.----In this law, holiness is promised ; by it, holiness is wrought.---In this law of faith, faith itself is promised, or grace and strength to believe ; ‘ Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,’ Psal. cx. 3. ‘ When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me,’ John xii. 32. This absolute promise is infinitely dispensed to sinners, that they may look unto, and rely upon this conquering power and drawing grace of God.----By this law of faith, I say, the house is delivered. Again,

3. There is a law by which the house is *governed* ; namely, the *law of love* : I mean, the *moral law*, as it is a rule of life and holiness, not a rule of acceptance (this were to make it a covenant of works) but a rule of obedience, in the hand of Christ. This is the law, which, by Moses, is reduced to ten words, ten commandments : and I call it a *law of love*, because our Lord Jesus reduced it into two words ; namely, *love to God*, and *love to our neighbour* : and the apostle reduced it to one word, viz. *love* ; *The end of the commandment is love*, 1 Tim. i. 9. And again, *love is the fulfilling of the law*, by which the house is governed. It may be called a *law of love*, because, as love is the *cord*, by which God draws his household to obedience ; so love is the *motive*, that engages them to obey it : they obey, not from slavish fear, like these that are under the yoke of the law, as a covenant ; but love, which *casts out fear*. Christ’s *yoke is easy*, because it is a loving yoke ; not driving by violence, but drawing them kindly by the cord of love in every duty ; not requiring rigorously, under pain of death and damnation, but constraining sweetly with delight to do the will of God. It is not a grievous law, requiring obedience,

dience, but giving no strength, and seeking brick without straw; but a gracious law, lined with love and grace, promising strength to obey, *working in them both to will and to do*. Hence his *commandments are not grievous*; duties are not gravamenous; ordinances are not a heavy burden; but rather like a 'chariot paved with 'love for the daughters of Jerusalem.'----This is the law by which the house is governed pleasantly and peaceably; for he that hath 'the government upon 'his shoulders, is the Prince of peace.'

The consideration of these three laws may clear your view about the *law of the house*: the law, from which the house is delivered, is the law of works, or covenant of works; the law, by which the house is delivered and recovered, is the law of faith or covenant of grace; and the law, by which the house is governed, is the law of love, or moral law, as a rule in the hand of a loving Jesus. Now, by the violation of the first of these, holiness was lost; by the publication of the second, holiness is restored; and by the promulgation of the third, holiness is required and established as a rule, for directing the household in the way of holiness. This leads me,

2dly, To the *second* question here, viz. *How HOLINESS is the law of the house?* For clearing this, it is necessary to remember, that the threefold law that I have mentioned, is firstly presented to us in the word of God. For, by the *first*, we are *convinced* of our unholiness; *by the law is the knowledge of sin*. By the *second*, we are *enlightened* to see where holiness is to be had, namely, in the holy covenant, the holy Jesus, whom God hath given to be the *covenant of the people*, as the gospel declares. By the *third*, we are *directed* in the way of holiness. The *first* is not the *law of the house*; for, they are delivered from it; only God makes use of it as a mean subservient to bring sinners to Christ, or to bring them to his house, where the only law is the two last; the *law of faith*, and the *law of love*. Now, the spiritual house of God is a holy

ly building, where holy faith, and holy obedience, comprehend all the holiness of the house : and, because it is to be built up in the *most holy faith*, therefore the *law of faith*, or covenant of grace is *the law of the house*, discovering the object and the ground of faith : and, because it is to be built up in a *most holy obedience*, therefore the *law of our love*, or moral law, as a rule, is *the law of the house*, directing and binding them to this obedience : in the former, holiness is promised ; in the latter, holiness is enjoined.

1. As to the *law of faith*, or the gospel, holiness is to be considered, as the *privilege* of the house ; and by this law of faith it is viewed as a purchased privilege, as a promised privilege, as a privilege freely conferred, and a privilege freely continued.

2. As to the *law of love*, or moral law, holiness is to be considered as the *duty* of the house ; for, holiness is the matter of the law ; holiness is the end of it ; holiness is the sum of it ; it forbids nothing but unholiness ; ‘ As he that has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy,’ 1 Pet. i. 15. The law of love must be a holy law ; for, as all unholiness is comprised in enmity to God and man, so all holiness is comprised in love to God and man.

3dly, The *third* question here was, *Why is it INGENUATE and doubled ?* ‘ This is the law of the house ; behold, this is the law of the house :’ Why is it twice proclaimed in the text ?

1. It imports, That *this law of the house* respecting holiness, is an *indispensible* law ; therefore it is notified ; and again notified with a *Behold*, that none may pretend ignorance. The moral law, materially considered, is eternally binding.

2. It imports, That ye are *deaf* and *dull* of hearing ; or, ‘ hearing, we do not hear ; but, like the deaf adder, stop our ear at the voice of the charmer ;’ and at the best are ready to forget that *this is the law of the house*. Therefore we are assured of it again and again.

3. It

3. It imports, That there is *danger* in neglecting this advertisement; and, in being remiss and slack in the study of holiness, it endangers the house; for, though the household of faith are all well intitled to heaven, and well secured from hell, yet the *law of the house* hath a sanction suitable to the children of the family; 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not 'in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and 'keep not my commandment: then will I visit their 'transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with 'stripes,' Psal. lxxxix. 30,---32. The rod of God is terrible, even to his children.

4. It may import, That this is the *beginning* and the *end* of true religion: therefore, that *this is the law of the house*, is both at the beginning and the end of the text. Here is the preface, *This is the law of the house*; here is the conclusion of the whole matter, *Behold, this is the law of the house*. This boundary is set round about the house of God; and, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, must be the motto of the house, from the top to the bottom thereof. This leads,

IV. To the *fourth* thing proposed, namely, the *extent* of this law of holiness, 'Upon the top of the 'mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall 'be most holy.' I think, in general, this speaks out the *universality* of that holiness God calls for *in his house*.---It should be universal *subjectively*, the whole heart, and all the faculties of the soul, should be engaged in the study of holiness; we are to 'love the 'Lord our God, with all our heart, soul, strength, and 'mind.'---It should be universal *objectively*, with respect to all the commands of God; 'Then shall I not 'be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments,' without exception, without limitation.---It should be universal *intensively*, with the utmost intenseness of soul, 'following the Lord with full purpose of mind; I said, I will take heed to my ways; 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep 'thy righteous judgments.'-----And it must be universal

sal *extensively*, with respect to all times and seasons, companies and occasions, places and circumstances.---
The law of the house binds to holiness universal in all these respects.

But more particularly, the *extent* of this holiness in the house of God, as here expressed, 'Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about,' seems to me to import an universality respecting every thing that relates to *the house of God*, the church of God: the expression suits the Old-Testament dispensation, which the material temple stood upon, the top of the mountain; but the gospel-meaning thereof, as it respects the New-Testament church, seems to be, that every thing about God's house, from the 'top to the bottom, shall be most holy, as becomes the spiritual temple of God.' It says,

1. That all the *officers* shall be most holy; ministers, elders, deacons; 'Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord,' Isa. lii. 11. And hence, when God comes to purge and purify his church, he is said particularly to *purify the sons of Levi*, Mal. iii. 3. Surely we, whose office is to go up to the top of the mount, ought to have holy feet to tread such a holy place; that it may be said of us, *How beautiful, on the mountains, are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!* Alas! many officers in God's house among us, that have most of the beauty of holiness about them, God is fast taking them away. He seems to be taking away the gold and silver, and leaving the dross: and, when he is taking down such as were props and pillars in the house, what shall we think, but that the house is like to fall about our ears, and heavy judgments at the door, when the *righteous are taken away from the evil to come?* But,

2. It says, that all the *members* of the house shall be most holy, all the children of the family; 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; and they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord,' Isa. lxii. 11. Every inhabitant of the house

house, every believer, every member of Christ, every professor of Christ, 'every one that nameth the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity.' It says, that not only *ministers* should be holy, but *people* should be holy; not only *the top of the mount*, but *the whole limit thereof round about*. All that enter within the walls of Zion must be holy, otherwise they are not indwellers, like children; but only incomers, like dogs; that shall be banished out with disgrace, and never admitted to the higher house.

3. It says, That all the *courts* and *judicatories* of the house should be most holy; synods most holy, and general assemblies of the house most holy; 'upon the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about.' When these courts and judicatories of the house, or assemblies of the church, whether inferior or superior ones, are most holy, and purged with the spirit of judgment, and spirit of burning, then they are entitled to heaven's protection; 'The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place in mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night,' Isa. iv. 4, 5. But when in days of degeneracy, corruption, and defaction, like ours, they become most unholy, then they are exposed to ruin and desolation.

4. It says, That all the *acts* and *statutes* of the house are to be most holy. And indeed the acts of assemblies and judicatories of the church are to be regarded only according to their holiness, and agreeableness to the holy word of God; 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. viii. 20. Acts issued even from the top of the mountain, if they be not according to the law of the house, are to be rejected, opposed, and protested against, as the commandments of men, and not the commandments of God; 'In controversy they shall stand in judgment, and they shall judge it according to my judgments: And they

‘ they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies,’ Ezek. xlv. 23, 24. And, indeed, it is but a dismal time, when the children of Zion are obliged to *plead* with their mother, and even *protest* against her acts and statutes.

5. It says, That all the *forms* and *ordinances* of the house should be most holy ; I mean, the form of doctrine, the form of worship, the form of discipline, the form of government, that they be according to the scripture-pattern ; as it was said to Moses concerning the form of the tabernacle, ‘ Look that thou make it after the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount,’ Exod. xxv 40. compared with Acts vii. 44. Heb. viii. 5. The doctrine, sound and lively ; worship, pure and spiritual ; discipline, powerful and impartial ; and government, beautiful and orderly, is the outward glory of the church : and God hath said, ‘ Upon all the glory there shall be a defence,’ Isa. iv. 5. But in so far as the *fences are taken away*, in as far is the *glory departed from Israel*, and the *ark of God taken by the Philistines*, within or without the house. The holiness of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the house, comprehending the ‘ top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof,’ ought to be defended, and contended for, that it be not spoiled, corrupted, and defaced by these who make themselves ‘ famous for lifting up hammers and axes upon the carved work ;’ and the rather, that the church of Scotland, particularly, has been so often in our reformation-days solemnly sworn, by national covenant, to the defence thereof, against all antichristian, unscriptural, and unholy forms and orders whatsoever.

6. It says, That all the *chambers* and *rooms* of the house should be most holy ; I mean, all the ordinances of the house, whether public, or private, or secret ; which are like so many chambers and rooms of the house to be kept clean and most holy ; for, ‘ He will be sanctified of all them that come nigh him,’ Lev.

x. 3. The outer rooms and public chambers of solemn

lemn ordinances, word, and sacraments; the more private chambers of spiritual conference and family-worship; and the secret chambers of retired devotion, the chamber of meditation, the chamber of prayer, shall all be most holy, and occupied in the most holy manner. Not only all the public rooms, but all the secret closets of the house, shall be most holy; not only *the top of the mount*, but *the whole limit thereof round about*; whatever part of the house we enter, is to be most holy, in the exercise of faith, love, and all the holy graces of the Spirit, and in spiritual endeavours, through grace, to get all that are about the house made holy, and all things that are within the house, 'the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about; this is the law of the house.' The Lord knows how little it is observed now!

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, was, to touch a little at the *privilege of access to the most holy place*. This being a special part of the gospel that lies in the text, hid under this Old-Testament phrase; I would open it in these two or three remarks.

1. "That *access to the most holy place*, is nothing else but access to the *most holy God*; and, therefore, "it is the most glorious privilege that a sinner can be advanced unto." The sanctuary, or holy of holies in the Old-Testament temple, was a symbol and type of the gracious presence of God; and to come to that, was to come to God: and the *holy of holies* is, in the New Testament, called a *throne of grace*, Heb. iv. 16. And what is it to come to throne of grace, or mercy-seat, but just to come to a merciful God, a gracious God in Christ? Therefore it is there said, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.' Where will we find mercy or grace, but with a merciful and gracious God? This is then the most holy place to which there is access.

Remark 2. "That access to the most holy place is by the *blood of Jesus*." The priests under the law,

went into the holy place with *the blood of bulls and goats* ; but, ' Christ, our High-priest, having entred, ' by his own blood, into the holy place,' Heb. ix. 12. ' we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the ' blood of Jesus,' Heb. x. 19. that is, in the faith of his blood ; a justice-satisfying blood, and sin-expiating blood, even we guilty sinners have freedom to come to a just and holy God, and boldness to expect grace and glory, as the purchase of that blood ; that blood which is justice-satisfying, sin-expiating, God-glorifying, sinner-sanctifying, heaven-purchasing.

Remark 3. " That access to the most holy place is " the *privilege* of the whole church." The whole family, all within the house, have access either proclaimed or obtained. All within the visible church, though but in the outer-court, have access proclaimed ; *Whosoever will, let him come.* And all within the church invisible, *viz.* believers, being in the inner-court, have access obtained, and daily admission to the holy place. Only the high priest under the law had access to the holy place, and that once a year only ; but now all believers, being a *royal priesthood*, and *made kings and priests unto their God*, have access, not once a-year, Heb. ix. 7. nor once a month, but, may be, once a-week, once a day ; yea, several times a-day ; perhaps twenty times in one communion-day ; even as oft as they get grace to act faith upon a God in Christ. This privilege of the whole church is here represented by ' the top of the mount, and the whole limit ' thereof round about,' having the privilege of the holy place.

Remark 4. " The privilege of access to the most " holy place, is not only now extended to *all persons* " within the house, at all times ; but also *every where*. " in all places where the church or children of God " are." Not only *the top of the mount*, but *the whole limit round about*, is the most holy place. Under the law, only the *sanctuary* was the most holy, but under the gospel the whole *mountain* shall be so, and the

whole

whole limit thereof round about; in as much as, wherever the believer is, in public or in secret, there he hath access to the most holy place, the most holy God; according to what our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 21. 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the true worshippers every where shall worship him in spirit and truth.' The holy place was formerly hid in a corner of the temple; for, the holy God hid himself in a corner, as it were, under the dark dispensation; but now the holy place, the holy God, is every where to be seen, and enjoyed in Christ. The *vail of the temple is rent in twain*, by the death of Christ; and the *holy of holies* is exposed, that whosoever will may come and see, come and partake, come and enjoy God thro' Jesus Christ, through whom the door of access is opened to us Gentiles, as well as it was to the Jews; 'Through him we both have access, by one spirit, unto the Father,' Eph. ii. 8. The most holy place is not now confined to the *top of the mountain*, where the temple stood, but extended to the *whole mountain*, and 'the whole limit thereof round about.' This is the 'law of the house,' the privilege of the house according to the law of faith, or covenant of grace, 'wherein the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men.' O has it so appeared unto you this day, as that you find you have got access to the most holy place! Then surely you are obliged to be the most holy people. Hence,

VI. The *sixth* head proposed, was, To show, that this privilege, of access to the most holy place, *obliges* the whole household of God, that are thus privileged, to be the *most holy people*. This grace of God that hath appeared to all men, does not, cannot, lead to licentiousness, but 'teaches to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,' Tit. ii. 11, 12. This privilege of access to the most holy place brings us,
not

not only under greater obligations to holiness than *Pagans*, that are far from the most holy place; not only under greater obligations to holiness than *professors*, who only are admitted to the outer court, and not to the most holy place; and not only under greater obligations to holiness than *Jews*, who were only admitted, by the high-priest, to the holy place in the material temple; but also it lays us under greater obligations to holiness than *Adam* in a state of innocency, suppose we were as innocent as he before the fall, and that the covenant of works were on the field, promising life to our perfect obedience; for when you are admitted to the most holy place, then ye see everlasting righteousness, and perfect obedience wrought to your hand, and eternal life purchased to your hand; and therefore are obliged, by the law of love and gratitude, to serve the God that hath saved you, and not to work hard for your life. And which of these are the strongest ties to love and obedience, namely, to find God saying, *Do, and do perfectly*, and you shall have eternal life for your pains? or, to find God giving you life, salvation, righteousness, and all in Christ; and, from the faith thereof, kindling love in your soul, and constraining you to serve him in gratitude? If this be the strongest obligation to holiness, then believers in Christ are under stronger obligations to holiness than ever Adam was in a state of innocency.

Access to the most holy place obliges us to be the most holy people, both effectively and argumentatively.

1. *Effectively and powerfully*; for, when one hath access to the most holy place, then he sees the glory of God; and, 'beholding this glory, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus, what the law teaches preceptively, the gospel teaches effectively. It is said of these that are mounted to the upper story of the house of God, to heaven, *they are like him, because they see him as he is*, Being come to the most holy place,

place, they see the most holy God, and are made like him in holiness. This privilege is commenced in the lower house; the more that believers see the most holy God in the most holy place, or the glory of God in the face of Christ, the more they are like unto him. When they *come boldly to the throne of grace*, or to the *holy of holies*, then they *obtain mercy*, and *find grace to help them*, and grace to strengthen in all the duties of holiness. All their holiness comes from that most holy place, to which they have access. And thus it obliges them to holiness sweetly, powerfully, necessarily, and effectually.

2. *Argumentatively*, it obliges them to be the most holy people; for, access to the most holy place furnishes them with an argument drawn from *equity*; 'What! shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer there-in?' Rom. vi. 2. Have we, by access to God, got a dead stroke given to the tyrant sin? and, shall we return to that slavery? *God forbid*. Access to the most holy place furnishes with an argument drawn from *gratitude*; 'Shall I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise? Is he not my Father that hath bought me?' Deut. xxxii. 6. Has he allowed me access to him, and shall I spurn at such bowels, and spit on the face of such love?---At the most holy place the man sees that there is *mercy with God that he may be feared* and obeyed, and so is encouraged to duty; and there he sees that it is God that *worketh in him both to will and to do*: there he sees that the law he is under is not a law of works, but a law of love, where all the commands are love commands; *If ye love me, keep my commandments*: and the threatnings, love-threatnings, not of vindictive wrath, but of fatherly displeasure. The law-threatening of hell, and vindictive wrath, works wrath and enmity, which is the height of disobedience; while the man fears that God will damn him, he flees from God as an enemy: but gospel threatnings, if we may so call them, work upon love and inflame it, while the believer fears, in a filial manner, saying,

saying, "O ! shall I incur my Father's displeasure, and
 " provoke him to hide his face, and deny me that
 " gracious presence of his, which is even a heaven
 " upon earth to me ?"---At the most holy place, the
 believer sees God *clothed with a garment of salvation*,
 compassed with love and grace, and riding, as it were,
 in the chariot of a free gracious promise ; not a pro-
 mise of life upon our doing, but a promise of grace
 to do, and of glory to crown our doing ; and of grace
 and glory both, as the reward of Christ's doing all.---
 In a word, when we have access to the most holy place,
 we see the place *encircled with blood*, the mercy-seat
 sprinkled with blood, and that by this blood the infi-
 nite justice of God is fully satisfied, and that we have
 to do with him as a reconciled God and friend ; and
 therefore, our obligation is not under the authority of
 ' an angry judge, but the authority of a loving father,
 testifying his everlasting love to us, by drawing with
 loving kindness : and shall we not kindly run, when
 thus kindly drawn ?---Why then, this privilege of ac-
 cess to the most holy place, lays us under the strictest
 and strongest obligation to be the most holy people.
 ' And, behold, this is the law of the house : ' the bond
 of love is the strongest bond.

VII. I come now to the *application* of the subject.
 And we shall apply it, in the first place, by deducing
 a few inferences for *information*. Is it so, *That uni-*
versal holiness is so much the established law of God's house,
that the whole family being privileged with access to the
most holy place, are under the strongest obligation to be the
most holy people ? Then,

1. Hence see, that God's house is not a *lawless house*,
 and believers in Christ ' are not without law to God,
 ' but under the law to Christ ; ' as the apostle expres-
 ses it. The *doctrine of grace* is no doctrine of *licen-*
tiousness : though many reproach gospel doctrine with
 a flourish of words, in their harangues on morality,
 under pretence of putting honour upon the law, while
 yet they neither understand law nor gospel, but mise-
 rably

rably confound and blend them together. *Do we make void the law, through faith?* Are we lawless Antinomians, because we declare the freedom of the house from the law of works? Alas! many, in their ignorant zeal for this law, discover their little acquaintance with the law of the house.

2. Hence see, that if *universal holiness* be the *law of the house*, because of the *universal access* there is to the *holy place*; then, how few appear to be of the *household of God* in our day; which is a day of universal unholiness, universal wickedness, universal profanity, and impiety. Oh! how few in our day go in to the most holy place, since few appear to be a most holy people! Where there is no access to the most holy place, there is no holiness: where little access, little holiness.

3. Hence see, the difference betwixt the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*, in respect of the place that holiness hath in the one and the other. The former, being *Do, and live*; therein duty opens the door to privilege, and man behaved first to be holy, before he could be admitted to the holy place: but the latter, being *Live, and do*; therein privilege opens the door to duty, and men must first have access to the holy place, before they can be a holy people; for they must first come to Christ, or to God in Christ, which is the holy of holies, and from hence bring all their holiness. That is one of the reasons why gospel-ministers preach so much upon gospel-privileges, and upon faith in Christ entring into the holy place, because this faith works by love, and is the root of all true holiness; for, when faith looks into the most holy place, there it sees the law hidden in the ark, Jesus Christ, and safely kept there; and the believer finds, that, by lying in the warm bosom of Christ, it is turned into a law of love.

4. Hence see, that it is not *safe to be without the church of God*: for, as it is the house where God dwells, and it is best dwelling where God dwells; so there is

access to the most holy place to be found there, *upon the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof round about.* As long as God dwells in a church, and gives evidence of his presence in these ordinances, let us bless him *for the day of small things, and wait upon him, who yet hides himself, in many respects, from the house of Jacob.* Let us pity those who are without the church; for, *without are dogs,* and they can have no view of the holy place; and, *where no vision is, the people perish.* And pity these who are only within the outer walls of the church, in the outer court, and never got grace to enter into the most holy place; and also these who have been within, but have gone out, and separate from the church; I mean, even separatists from the church of Scotland, some upon a kind of *independent footing,* and others affecting novelties, *betaking themselves to English popish ceremonies, and new modes of worship.* At the same time many true friends to presbytery are on the borders of separating from this established church, upon a disgust at the defections of the day; and it is to be lamented, that many stumbling-blocks have been laid in peoples way; and it is sure, when a peculiar church, like Romish Babylon, comes to be wholly corrupt, then that rule for separation will hold, *Come out from among them, my people.* This was what justified our glorious reformation from Popery. In this case, it is not a sinful separating from the church of God, but a dutiful separating from the chapel of the Devil. And I own, that, as matters stand at present in the church of Scotland, we seem to be on the very brink of a schism: but, whatever tenderness I desire to show to weak consciences, in many circumstances, I have never, *as yet,* seen ground to preach separation, whatever ground I see to testify against the corruptions and defections of the day. I hope God hath not yet left the house; he is yet to be found in these galleries of his house, the ordinances of his worship. Mean time, I have a concern particularly for these that are mourning over the
defec-

defections and defilements of the house, and keeping the cleanest rooms they can find therein, and whose lot is to have officers obtruded upon them, and have not the gospel, but the law, or mere moral harangues, preached to them; and I desire to pray they may be directed to their duty in an evil day. This leads me to.

A word of *lamentation*, which is the next use I would make of the doctrine. Even on a communion-day, when we are holding communion in the house of God, we may lament the disorders and irregularities therein, contrary to the *law of the house*. Surely the house of God in our day is a ruinous house, and needs to be repaired and reformed. If this be the law of the house, that every member, every part, every room of the house, be *most holy*; then surely the law of the house is broken and violate in our day; for we may see the reverse of the law, even unholiness, *upon the top of the mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about*. Behold, this is the sad state of the house; and, since you cannot be duly concerned without knowing the circumstances of it, I shall hint a little at the visible defects of the visible part of the house among us.

1 Oh! where is *personal holiness* (to begin at home) among the visible members of the house! The law of faith, or covenant of grace, proclaiming access to the most holy place, is the law of the house; and yet, alas! how little faith is in the house! how little believing or *entring into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*! The law of love, or moral law, as a rule of obedience, is the law of the house; but, Oh! how little love to God or man issuing from that faith! Does not *iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold*? There is little to be seen of faith's working by love, but much to be seen of hatred working by unbelief.---It is the law of that house, that we *love one another*; but, behold, how many are devouring one another, through malice, envy, pride, and contention!---It is the law of

the house more particularly, that we *have no other god, but the most holy God*; that we perform no other worship, but most holy worship; that we reverence his name, as the most holy name; that we sanctify the Sabbath, for a most holy rest all the day.-- It is the law of the house, that we be most holy in every *relative capacity and station*; that we be, according to our place, holy magistrates, holy ministers, holy parents, holy children, holy masters, holy servants.-- It is the law of the house, that there be no murder in thought, word, or deed: no whoredom, in thought, word, or deed: no false witnesses, no covetous heart in the house; nothing but the most holy place, and the most holy people: but, ah! where is the spirit of holiness? And where is the practice of holiness? Where is the exercise of holy graces, holy faith, holy love, holy penitency? Where is holy preaching, holy hearing, holy singing, holy praying, holy communicating, holy walking? I suppose, when matters are thoroughly conversed, and seriously considered, there is little to be found among us, but unholy thoughts, unholy words, unholy actions; and little holy lamenting over our unholiness. Again,

2. If we look to the *public*, may we not find matter of lamentation? While it is the law of the house of the God of heaven, that *nothing be done therein but according to the will of the God of heaven*; yet many things are done, contrary to his will.-- It is the law of the house, that the house be kept in *repair*, and do not ly waste; but, behold, the walls are broken down, and the carved work demolished. It is the law of the house, that none be reckoned *members* of the family but these that are *a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a spiritual temple*, 1 Pet. ii. 9.; at least, with reference to the visible church, that they have a visible and credible profession: it is not these that have worldly lordships, lairdships, and heritages, that have, upon this account, any title to be members of Christ's spiritual house and kingdom; for, *his kingdom is not of this world*;

world ; his house is distinct therefrom : such may be members of God's house, but not as they are lords, lairds, heritors, gentles, or nobles ; some such may be called of God into his house, but *not many noble, not many great men are called*, 1 Cor. i. 26. Not many stocked with worldly riches or worldly wisdom : yet such, under the name of heritors, if they be but *Protestant* in profession, though they were *Pagans* in practice, seem, in our day, to be declared members of God's spiritual house. But, notwithstanding, it is the law of the house of God, Acts i. 15, 26. vi. 3. iv. 23. as the original word here demonstrates, that only the true members of the family, wherein every member is a *master*, a *king*, and a *priest* to his God, should chuse out from among them, by *common suffrage*, the *servants* and *officers* of the house. And, indeed, it is the law of every house, that no servant be obtruded upon them by foreigners, against the mind of the house, or against the will of the family ; much more is it the law of God's house, that neither prince, patron, nor heritor, as denominate only from their temporal estate, should have power over God's spiritual house, in chusing and electing of their spiritual servants and officers, to the excluding of the voice and vote of the proper members of the family ; yet this law of the house is manifestly violated by some late acts in our day.---Again, it is the law of the house, that the *doctrine of the gospel* be maintained with zeal, and damnable doctrine be rejected with indignation ; yet, how much gospel doctrine hath been condemned and darkened in our day ; and damnable doctrine, such as that of Arianism, slenderly censured ; and many corruptions in doctrine either looked over and tolerate, or not sufficiently testified against, and that in a time when the house within is polluted with a boundless toleration of errors without doors ? ---It is the law of the house, that the *oath of God* be inviolably maintained, and nothing contrary to it be admitted or allowed ; yet, how have our solemn oaths to the great God and

master

master of the house, and covenants, both national and solemn league, been solemnly violate, broken, burnt, and buried, and a multitude of sinful and unnecessary oaths received and allowed in the room thereof?---It is the law of the house, that the *worship of God* be most holy, and agreeable to the word and will of God; and that no *threshold* be set up besides his threshold, and posts by his posts, Ezek. xliii. 8. And yet behold abjured superstitious worship, and English Popish ceremonies, set up in several places of the nations; and the guilt hereof is chargeable upon the house, in as far as it is not duly regretted, and so far as possible remedied.---It is the law of the house, that the *discipline* therein do not degenerate into *cruelty* towards the children of the family; and yet, what ground to complain, in our day, of ecclesiastical tyranny exercised towards the people of God, in settling many congregations? And thus Christ, in his members, is wounded in the house of his friends, and his poor despised people obliged to say of the watchmen, *They smote me, they wounded me, they took away my vail from me.*---It is the law of the house, that the *government* therein be beautiful, orderly, and holy; and that the several under-governors of the house have an orderly walk and conversation, both in their private families and in their public managements; and that they be *clean that bear the vessels of the Lord*: yet, how many officers and elders in the church live very loosely, and neglect the worship of God in their families? And some of them sit in our national assemblies, that yet join with the church of England in their superstitious worship, when in that nation, to the reproach of the Presbyterial profession.---It is the law of the house, that *fasts* and *thanksgivings* be appointed therein, when providence calls for it; and yet, how is this turned into desuetude, and the church losing ground, and seeming to give up with, instead of asserting and exerting, her intrinsic power; and seemingly surrendering it to the hand of the civil magistrate, whose power ought not to be privative, but

but cumulative, in this matter? Secular power, and spiritual, in a Christian land, ought to be sweetly subservient one to another, but ought not to be blended or confounded together, not destructive one of another.---It is the law of the house, that the *Lord* and *King* of the house be *exalted*, and that his royal headship and sovereignty be asserted, in opposition to all that assume to themselves a sovereignty, in all causes, civil or ecclesiastical; yet this duty hath been fearfully neglected, and the Lord of the house many ways affronted in his own family.---It is the law of the house, that, since God orders his own children to *plead with their mother*, when any confusion takes place in the family, in order to the redressing of what is grievous that the mother *regard the pleading and redress* accordingly: and yet, when the children have done so in our day, she hath given a deaf ear, and deeper wounds, instead of favourable answers. O if this may set them a-pleading with their Father in heaven, who hath said, *When he builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory, and he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer: This shall be written for the generations to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.*---In a word, it is the law of the house, that there be no *schism* nor *division* there, because *a house divided against itself cannot stand*; and yet, how many divisions take place? and how many grounds are daily laying down for schism, and matter of offence given by multiplied recessions from reformation-principles and practices? *Offences must come, but wo to them by whom they come.*---It were endless to speak of all the particulars wherein the law of the house is *violated*; only these are some of the most obvious to me, which I speak of as matter of lamentation, that ye may know on what account you need to be concerned for the house of God, and to pray for the welfare of Jerusalem, and the reparation of her walls.

This is the state of the house visible in our day, *Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof*, is become

come most unholy; behold, this is the state of the house. And yet for all this there remains some good thing in the church of Scotland, notwithstanding of all the evils that take place; As,

1. There is a goodly number yet of worthy, faithful, and able *ministers* of the gospel, whereof some, perhaps, are betrayed by the power of temptation, and the strength of carnal reasoning, to fall in with these measures in the Lord's house, which, after calm and sedate consideration, they will be loth to justify, and will be sorry for: Therefore,

2. There are not a few yet, who are, and will be, *witnesses* for God, against all the corruptions of the Lord's house, and ready to give their testimony against the defections of the day wherein we live.

3. There are *pure ordinances* administered in the house; the word and sacraments administered according to the gospel-institution; and the doctrine of the gospel preached in purity.

4. There are some signs and evidences now and then of the *Lord's presence* in these ordinances, and of his power in the sanctuary, reviving and strengthening the hearts of his hidden ones, and bringing them to the chambers of the King, even to the holy of holies, under the covert of the blood of Jesus.

This leads me to an use of *examination*, for trying whether or not ye be such members of the house of God, as have been privileged with access to the invisible part of the house, the *most holy place*; and what effect this hath wrought upon you, to make you holy, as the Lord your God is holy.

1st, Have you been *admitted* to the most holy place? Have you got *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, at this occasion, or formerly? If so, then I will tell you,

1. You have lost *all boldness and confidence in the flesh*, Philip. iii. 3.; all confidence in yourself, all confidence in your own righteousness and worthiness: nothing keeps you in countenance before God, but
your

your view of the worthiness and righteousness of Jesus. Again,

2. What way got you into the holy place, or into the presence of the most holy God. Surely it is not *without blood*. Can you say, that you was carried into the holiest, as it were, in a *chariot paved with love*, and the *covering thereof was purple*? Can you say, I saw something like a *rainbow about the throne* of grace, and not only a purple covering over my head, but also a purple pavement under my feet, a pleasant pavement, laid partly with the white marble of the love of God, and partly with the red marble of the blood of Christ; and, upon this pavement, laid before me in the gospel, my heart went forward to the most holy place; and I saw that the most holy God was a reconciled God in Christ, a well-pleased God in Christ?

3. Have you seen that the *holy of holies* is nothing else but the *throne of grace*, having grace above it, and grace beneath, and grace round about it; and that, therefore, the most holy place is a place meet for you to come to, meet for you to rest in, for you, unworthy you, that cannot be saved any other way but by grace, free grace venting thorow that blood of Jesus?

4. Have you seen, in that holy place, that the *promises of God* are all *yea and amen* in Christ; that they are the *New Testament in his blood*; and that, therefore, every promise is sure, being dipt in blood, sealed with blood, with justice-satisfying blood; and that, therefore, justice requires, as well as mercy, that they be accomplished?

2dly, What *sanctifying effect* hath this access to the most holy place had upon you? Do you find yourself more sweetly bound to universal holiness? Why, say you, I find myself under an obligation to be a most holy person; because, I think, I have been admitted, in some respect, to the most holy place; but I tremble to think of what you are now to say, because I find the lamentable want of holiness, and cannot think you

E will

will give me a mark that will argue my being holy ; and therefore fear my access to the holy place, that sometimes I thought I had, to be but delusion. I must tell you,

1. If you have been in the most holy place, and got some holy impressions there, then ye will see yourself to be *most vile* : when Job was let in to the most holy place, then he cries out, *Behold, I am vile*, chap. xl. 4. It is a sight of the holy God that makes us to see ourselves to be unholy creatures. You that value yourselves as good and holy, you have never seen a holy God in the face : but thou that hatest thyself, and lothest thyself as an unholy creature, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog ; so foolish am I, and ignorant ; I am as a beast before thee* : thou art a holy person.

2. Try your holiness by a question or two : What is your *desire* ? Is it, O to be holy ! O to be like unto Christ !--- What is your *hope* ? Do you love to think of getting to heaven, because there you will be like him, by seeing him as he is :--- What is your *delight and love* ? Can you say you love the law, because it is a holy law, and because it is a law of love.--- What is your *lamentation* ? Is it, Oh ! unholy sinner that I am ! O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of death ?--- What is your *how long* ? Is it, O how long shall I sojourn in Mesek, and dwell in the tents of Kedar !--- What is your regard to the law of the house ? are you grieved to see that it is violate by yourself and others ?--- What is your regard to the members of the house ? do you love the saints, because they are holy ? Some chuse a drinking club and cabal before the company of the godly that lay them under a restraint ; but, is your *delight with the saints, the excellent ones of the earth* ?--- Again, what is your regard to the Lord of the house ? Can you say, from the bottom of your soul, that, however unholy you are, yet you love him because he is holy, and can rejoice in him as a holy God that hates sin ? This is a sweet mark that you have been in the holy place, and got the

the print of God's holiness stamped on your soul. A hypocrite may love God because he is good and merciful ; but I do not think he can love him, because he is a holy God that hates sin. Is that the language of thy soul, *O give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness ?*---In a word, what is thy *resolution* through grace? Is it, that you will endeavour, in his strength, to glorify God by a holy walk; and yet are you feared to rest on your resolutions, and therefore turn your resolutions to prayers, saying, *Lord, let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, the son of man, whom thou hast made strong for thyself, and henceforth we will not go back ?* After trial see your duty.

My last use, therefore, shall be by way of *exhortation*. 1. To these who are without the house. 2. To these who have been admitted into the holy place.

1st, To you that are *without the house*, that are no members of God's family, but are unbelievers. I exhort you to come into the house of God ; *For without are dogs, unholy dogs*, Rev. xxii. 15. Why, may some think, are you calling us to come into a house, where there are so many disorders, as you have been mentioning ? It is best to stay without doors : why, man, woman, when I call you to come into the house of God, it is, not only to the outer house, but to come in to the most holy place, and to enter into the holiest by faith ; that is, *come to God in Christ*. The outer house is only the visible church, and the visible glory is indeed much defaced in our day ; but there is an invisible part of the house, the most holy place, that we call you to come to : not to an outward visible profession only ; not to outward ordinances only ; for, by your being within the walls of this house, you are seemingly come there already : but you may be visible church-members, and come to ordinances and sacraments, and yet strangers to God, if you have never come in to the most holy place by coming in to God in Christ. And, Oh ! why stand you without doors, contrary to the law of the house, inviting all to *come*

in ! Rev. xxii. 17. Let me tell you, while you stay without doors, you are *without hope, and without God in the world*; neither fellow-citizens with the saints, nor of the household of God, in a spiritual sense; and the visible outward advantages you enjoy, while you are only in the outer court, will aggravate your condemnation, if ye come not in. I must tell you, while you are not within the house, in a spiritual sense, you are not under the law, *the law of the house*; I mean, the law of faith and love, but under the law of works, and so under the curse; for, *curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* The wrath of God abides on you, while you abide in unbelief, without coming in to the Surety, and closing with his law-biding righteousness. While you come not in to the most holy place, you remain in a most unholy state and way; for, it is this holy place that makes a holy people: Christ is the true temple, the holy place, the house where God dwells; and how can you see God, if you come not to his house? How can you speak with God, if ye come not to his house? How can you draw up acquaintance with him, or attain conformity to him? If you do not behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, you can never be *changed into his image, from glory to glory.* Without coming to Christ, you shall never have holiness; and without holiness, you shall never see God in heaven.

Consider, O sinner, *the law of the house*, with reference to you that are without.--It is *the law of the house*, that the door be open for all comers; *Whosoever will, let him come.*---It is *the law of the house*, that all comers shall be welcome; *He that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.*---It is *the law of the house*, that all that come in shall be children of the family; *We are the children of God by faith in Christ: Without are dogs, but within are children.*---It is *the law of the house*, that no objection be sustained as lawful against your coming into Christ, or to the most holy place; for the law of
grace

grace is calculate, of infinite wisdom, for answering every objection : it is not lawful to object any thing against coming in to the holy place. Fear of God's infinite justice is no lawful objection ; for, here is a sacrifice, satisfying justice. Your great sin and guilt is no lawful objection ; for, here is guilt-expiating blood. Your total want of all good in yourself, is no lawful objection ; for, here is all fulness to supply you. Your unworthiness is no lawful objection ; for, the worthiness of the Lamb is the only thing that is regarded in the most holy place. Your poverty is no lawful objection ; for, here are the unsearchable riches of Christ, both to pay your debt, and bear your charge. Your rags and nakedness is no lawful objection ; for, here is the robe of righteousness to cover you, that the *shame of your nakedness may not appear*. Your fear of God's having some secret purpose against you, is no lawful objection, but a horrid thought ; for *the law of the house* makes nothing but God's revealed will your rule. Your weakness and inability is no lawful objection ; for, *strength and beauty are within his sanctuary ; Strength is within his holy place*, to which you are called to come ; and drawing power is put in the promise, such as that, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me*, that you may take his help, and look to his promised power and grace. Your unholiness is no lawful objection ; for, you are invited to come to the most holy place, that you may be incorporated amongst the most holy people. In a word, distance is no lawful objection ; for, the most holy place is at hand ; since you cannot go up to the holy of holies, the holy of holies is come down to you : it is on *the top of the mountain*, and *the whole limit thereof round about*. *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*. And the question is, Do you welcome a Jesus, that is come to you in this gospel, to make you holy, as well as happy for ever ? Can your heart say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord* ? It is one good way of coming to him, to welcome his coming to you. Is there any
echo

echo in your heart ? When he says, Sinner, come thou to me ; does your heart say, Lord, come thou to me, for I cannot come to thee without I be drawn ? When he cries, *Come* ; and you cry, *Come* ; ye are not far from meeting together. Well, sinner, the door is open, O tarry not till the door be shut: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* Say not, *To-morrow*, thou fool, lest this night thy soul be required of thee, and then to all eternity you shall never have another offer. O may the arm of power accompany the offer of grace in the evening of a communion-day.

2dly, I would close with a word to you that have been, either now or formerly, *drawn in to the most holy place* : surely it is your duty to be a most holy people ; for, *universal holiness is the law of the house ; on the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.* I should exhort and direct you in a word.

O Sirs, are you come into the sanctuary of God ? O then *put off your shoes ; for the place where ye stand is holy ground !* Put off your filthy shoes, for the room of the house you have entred into is a clean room, a holy place ; the Lord of the house is most holy. Holiness is the *name* of God ; he is the *holy One of Israel.* Holiness is the *will* of God ; *This is the will of God, even your sanctification.* Holiness is the *work* of God ; and you are his *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Holiness is the *nature* of God ; and you are made *partakers of the divine nature.* Holiness is the *glory* of God ; and he is *glorious in HOLINESS.*

Consider, the *house* of God is a holy house, and the church is not God's house, but in so far as it is holy. His *word* is a holy word ; his *ordinances* are holy ordinances ; his *table* is a holy table ; and *holiness becometh his house for ever.*

Consider the *beauty* of holiness : the beauty of faces is but skin deep, a rotting beauty ; the beauty of cloths and ornaments is but a patch upon a sore, a skreen to cover your nakedness ; but the beauty of holiness is what makes a man all glorious within and without.

All

All *pleasure* without holiness is but grief: for the pleasure of sin is what man must either repent of here, or be damned for hereafter. All *profit* without holiness is but loss; *For what shall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? but godliness is great gain.* All honour without holiness will end in shame and disgrace.

Consider the *opposite* of holiness, namely, SIN; that sin is a reproach to any people, much more to such professing and privileged people as you are. The profane world, that see your works and not your faith, if you be vile, vain, wanton, and profane in your walk, they will say, there is your religion; and thus you bring a reproach upon your holy religion. And who, that ever was admitted to the most holy place, would not blush and be ashamed to bring it under such undeserved reproach?

Consider what *regard* is owing to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the credit of our holy religion.

Consider what is the *end* of God in all his great works toward you; this is the end of election; *He hath chosen you that you should be holy*; this is the end of redemption; *That he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* It is the end of sanctification by the Spirit, that you should be holy.

What is the end and design of ordinances, but to be means of holiness? What is the end of merciful providences, but that you may *fear the Lord and his goodness*? What is the end of crossing and afflicting providences, but to purge away your dross, and make you *partakers of his holiness*? What is the end of all the graces of the Spirit, if you have the faith of Christ, or the hope of glory in him? Why then, *faith purifies the heart*; and *he that hath this hope purifies himself, even as he is pure.*

Consider what *obligations* you are under beyond all persons

persons in the world to be the most holy people, in the midst of this unholy age.

18 AP 68

All the *direction* I offer is, See that you be much in the *exercise of faith*, entering again and again into the most holy place; for this will, as I said, have both an operative and argumentative, both a physical and a moral influence upon your holiness. When you come to the most holy place and see the most holy God, you will find yourself under the strongest obligation to be holy, and such bonds laid upon your heart, as will bind you sweetly and strictly to holiness, even the bond of love constraining you. In the most holy place you will see something wonderful, even your salvation and justification, lying between two everlasting breasts; Rom. iii. 24.; between the everlasting grace of God; and the everlasting righteousness of Christ; * Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* And what do you think of seeing yourself, as it were, between these two everlasting breasts of God; and, at the same time, his everlasting arms holding and embracing you in his bosom? This is the notable sight of faith to be seen in the most holy place; and when you come to see this great sight, the warm bosom of God's everlasting love will give you a warm heart, and leave a strong impression of the law of love and holiness upon you. *This is the law of the house*. If you get to the top of the mountain with Moses, O how should your face shine, even when ye come down to the bottom of the mount, and go into the company of others round about the mount! Not only a communion-table, but your common tables, should be holiness to the Lord. In every company, in every place, let this be your motto, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. * This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.*